

High yield, high production genetics

ROMNEY | ROMWORTH | BLACKFACE | STREAKERS



Grassendale
Genetics

Good morning to you all!

Nothing like being forced into the office by a screaming southerly, Yards full of ewes receiving their pre-vaccinations and the dagging trailer busy at it.

With what seems to be to many ewes and not enough grass at this point. But as I was just told by a wise man "it's always darkest before the dawn."

There is positivity out there with 2th & 4th shorn ewes (SIL 180%) being sold at fielding sale yards made \$191 last Friday, there is light at the end of the tunnel, this is a lift \$80-100 per head in the last month.

With Scanning percentages back 10-15% on the East coast due to dry conditions coupled with the NZ kill schedule already 1 million ahead, the processes will be keen to secure lamb for the new season, it will be a competitive environment with competitive prices.

Lamb prices where we stand today \$7.30

Contract prices come out at \$7.50 and won't be long before spot prices match this.

Shorter term rates are looking to be 85-100 basis points lower since January, some of the longer term looking to be 140-155 basis points lower, which is all positive going forward.

If your keen on Podcasts, a great listen is **Simon Quilty** - Red meat revelations insights from global analyst Simon Quilty.

ON FARM AT GRASSENDALE

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for podcast

The war against fencing is being won slowly, but tupping was certainly a whole lot easier and contamination almost nil, really starting to reap the benefits of the DNA technology.

A really tough decision was made easier thanks to cyclone Gabrielle, where the back of **Grassendale** has been planted in pines due to the significant cost of repair fencing. A bizarre feeling when mustering sheep forward for the last time, never to be pastorally grazed again. A case of "Right tree right place" but still an emotional and incredibly hard decision.

As mentioned in last years newsletter the new addition to the **Grassendale** flock the **Streaker**, a Hair breed comprising of Australian White and Wiltshire cross.

All our streakers have now been **DNA profiled** and a new flock number set up on SIL. We patented the Name "**Streaker**" this year as we did "**Romworth**" a few years ago.



One day old purebred
Aussie white embryo lamb

A BIT OF THE BACKGROUND ON THIS EXCITING JOURNEY WITH THE STREAKER.....

George and Guy have spent a fair bit of time over that last few years looking in North and South island to find a hair breed sheep that would work on **Grassendale**. It was triggered by the total frustration in the wool industry and clients asking George about the hair breed sheep.

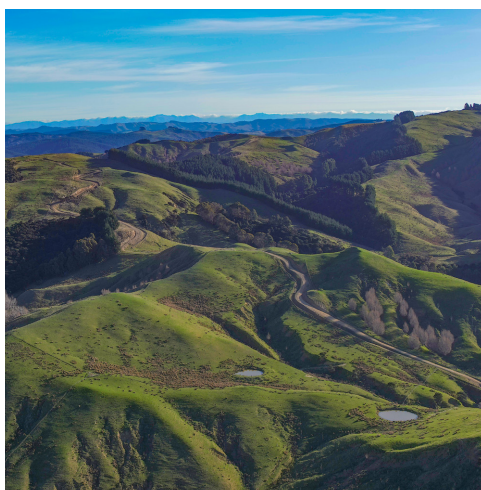
Of the 700 streaker ewes, that are in there third season on **Grassendale**, we will lamb 490 this year, that's a 30% cull rate. And feel we are making pretty rapid progress around structural soundness. There has been no drenching of these at all since they have been on farm.

We like the type of the Aussie white but had concerns around the climatic issues running them out here and possible feet and constitution issues, so came to the conclusion that it wasn't one breed that was going to suit **Grassendale** best.

Hence a trip to Australia to thoroughly investigate and critique the Australian white sheep further. Ironically this led us to Andrew Rayner (Skippy) who had previously worked in Omarama and was the contact through Guy. We went through all the ewes and rams, to select on Type. Rams were chosen for a Semen draw and select Ewes to be Embryo transfer donors. All the possible Rams and Ewes we wanted to use were blood tested, that information was sent to Lincoln University to be analysed in relation to the foot rot marker. (The foot rot gene marker is a blood test John Hickford created). Anything that was a 1/1 response which is deemed least pathway to have these feet issues was chosen for our procedure. 10 rams and 72 ewes were selected.

We then purchased 400 straws of semen and 72 embryos and imported them home here to NZ.

Thanks to Anyika Scotland from Vet Services Hawkes Bay, we put the embryos into **Grassendale** recipient ewes and used the Semen to implant via AI 250 of our elite Streaker ewes here at **Grassendale**.



The rest of our Streakers on **Grassendale** were naturally mated to an Aussie White/Wiltshire cross rams.

We aim to benchmark these a little differently to the mainstream breeds, on a Productive trait - Growth, Meat, Survival, Intramuscular fat, Scanning and Methane. This will be in conjunction with Zoetis and SIL and of course most importantly for us the structural traits, type feet etc, and thirdly the eating quality.

Over time and in doing our job properly, we can remove the undesirable traits... **Exciting challenge ahead.**

A pleasing result was when we culled streaker ram lambs out of Hoggets and they did 24.43kg carcass weight.

Overall the main line of rams at Grassendale, a mob of 1450, look to be the most even well presented line yet. Something we are always striving to be better at.

The theory of an animal putting its energy into growth of protein rather than wool was clearly visible. We are really excited about our **Streakers** and how they are developing.

There will **100 Streakers for sale** this year, please let us know if you're interested in viewing.

Ram selection will come around fast, so please send your order forms in ASAP, look forward to catching up again this year, and do not hesitate to call if needing to chat about the season ahead.

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Grassendale
Orderform**



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We farm 520 ha of medium to steep hill country in Makuri in the Taranaki district. We run 2100 ewes 700 hoggets and 100 beef cows.

We started buying Coopworth rams off Grassendale 8 years ago to put across our Romney ewe flock and did this for 3 years, and then for the last 5 years we have been buying Grassendale Romworth's. Our scanning % has lifted considerably from a 160 % between 2014-16 to a five year average of 175% across the whole flock and likewise the lambing % from 121% between 2014 -2017 to a five year average of 143%.

A big contribution to this lift is the Grassendale genetics, our scanning is repeatable year after year and right where we want it to be, our 2tooths usually scan very similar to the mixed age, this year we had less than 1% dry ewes across the whole flock.

In Makuri we generally have pretty average springs with some very poor lambing weather, I find that the mothering ability of our sheep is outstanding and is a big contributor to their survivability. I think lamb survivability is one of the most important traits in our cold and wet environment and the Grassendale sheep certainly provide this.

Our weaning weights have risen as well which is pretty impressive considering our lambing % is much higher than it was 8 years ago.

We also use the Grassendale Beltex/Suftex terminal sire across our B flock and are very happy with these, they have got the biggest eye muscle in their chops I have ever seen and taste amazing.

Daniel & Lou Bowie

Scanning	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
MA	160	156	173	178	170	171	178	176	177	176
2 Tooth	161	152	170	167	167	172	178	173	174	176
Docking %	113	115	127	135	141	142	150	145	139	



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